

Testimony by Connecticut League for Nursing (CLN)
Before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
1:00 p.m. – LOB Room 2E
February 24, 2011

Testimony concerning Proposed Bill 5888:
An Act Concerning College Credit for Transfer from a Licensed Practical Nursing Education
Program into a Registered Nursing Education Program

Good afternoon Senator Beth Bye, Representative Roberta Willis and members of the Higher Education and Workforce Committee. I am Marcia Proto, Executive Director of the Connecticut League for Nursing (CLN) - a statewide non-profit that promotes the excellence in nursing education to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to allow me to comment on proposed **HB 5888, An Act Concerning College Credit for Transfer from a Licensed Practical Nursing Education Program into a Registered Nursing Education Program.**

The Connecticut League for Nursing (CLN) supports efforts to facilitate educational mobility of nurses across the continuum of nursing education, from the LPN to Advanced Practice levels, to address the shortage of registered nurses. As a constituent league of the National League for Nursing (NLN), we are committed to expanding the pipeline of nurses to meet the healthcare needs of Connecticut residents.

For over 10 years, CLN has taken an active role to address ways in which to expand the nursing workforce pipeline and positively impact the nurse faculty shortage. Having sponsored numerous statewide education forums to address nursing shortage issues, working collaboratively with statewide nursing and workforce organizations to submit federal grants to address the nursing faculty shortage, and conducting research to publish white papers addressing the education and workforce challenges that the state of Connecticut faces related to the need for more registered nurses; CLN is committed to making educational opportunities available to all nurses wishing to advance their nursing careers.

Pertaining to HB5888, currently Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Programs within the state of Connecticut do not award college credit for their nursing studies, yet mechanisms have been put in place to have the coursework attain college credits.

For a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to obtain credits to be applied to secure the Registered Nurse (RN) credential, the LPN would first need to apply and be accepted at an Associate Degree (AD) nursing program for admission.

Once accepted would be referred to CLN and Charter Oaks State College for enrollment into a 10-week online "LPN- RN Bridge Course" to validate nursing skills and abilities of the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) prior to their transition into an Associate Degree (AD) nursing program.

Should a student “pass” this bridge course, the LPN would also need to complete and “pass” a one-credit transition course offered at the AD nursing program- only then would 15-17 nursing “credits” to be award to the LPN for their previous nursing education. This way, allowing the LPN to start his/her education in Year-2 of the AD program providing that all general education requirements for admission to the AD nursing program had been completed. (LPNs cannot enroll directly.) The bridge course services approximately 50 LPNs per year. CLN and Charter Oak State College usually offer the course two times a year, yet most recently it has been offered 3 times per year to meet the needs of the AD programs.

Many statewide initiatives have been established in Connecticut to support the mobility of nurses including Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the Connecticut LPN Programs (state-based) and the Community College System to allow for some college credit to be awarded for general education taken while enrolled in a state-based LPN Program; as well as the dual-admission process between the Community College System and the State of Connecticut University System.

Moreover, new initiatives to address the nursing pipeline are being implemented throughout the state such as the grant-funded LPN-RN Fast-Track project being piloted at Gateway Community College in conjunction with CLN, the Workforce Alliance, 1199 Education and Training Fund, New Haven Public Schools and funded by the Annie E. Case Foundation. This is a “true” one year fast-track program for the LPN from admission to graduation from an AD Program. This model is being leveraged statewide for the next admission cycle for the Comm. College Nursing Programs.

Therefore, I recommend that a taskforce be created to review all the current mobility and pipeline processes and initiatives that are being undertaken for nurses at all levels within the state; and therefore identify best-practice models and replicate these models throughout the nursing education continuum so that seamless transition exist for all students.

CLN is excited to assist in any manner that is needed. This discussion is vital to Connecticut to insure we have nurses at all levels prepared to provide quality care to the residents of our state.